

break with the Allies, repudiation of secret treaties and direct negotiation with Germany. Again none of these policies got a majority of the votes. The Council was at an impasse.

Meanwhile, the Smolny was bracing itself for the final assault. The Petrograd Soviet openly appointed a military revolutionary committee to make preparations to seize power. A conference of local Soviets of the Petrograd district met in Kronstadt and reiterated the demand for an immediate transfer of all power to the Soviets. A conference of Soviets of the northern region passed a similar resolution. On November 3 a conference of representatives of the Petrograd garrison proclaimed its allegiance to the Soviet as the sole authority recognized by the soldiers. Then the Soviet of Moscow proclaimed itself the sole local government.

In a dramatic appearance before the Council of the Republic, Verkhovsky demanded immediate withdrawal of Russia from the war. His appeal increased the confusion. The Council could not change the course of foreign policy except by overthrowing the government, but the War Minister did not think of this implication of his proposal. The government ordered him to resign, and the Communists used this order as evidence that any step toward hastening the end of the war was a crime in the eyes of the government.

Moreover, the War Minister's proposal came too late. Perhaps the end of hostilities and demobilization of the army would have given new strength and stability to the Provisional Government in July or August, when the moderate Socialists controlled almost all the military forces of the nation. But the dissolution of the coalition after the July days, the delay in elections to the Constituent Assembly, the conspiracy of the generals, the leniency of the moderates toward persons involved in this conspiracy, the weakness of the new government, and the disunity in the ranks of democracy had altered the political setting.

Perhaps, even then, a bold reshuffling of the Cabinet could have saved the situation. However, Kerensky decided that this was the time for him to save Russia single-handed. Without consulting the All-Russian Executive Committee or the Council of the Republic, without even informing these bodies of his intentions, he called troops from the front—as if there were troops that would follow his call!

Late in the afternoon of November 5, Cheremissov summoned me urgently to the front headquarters. There he handed me a decoded telegram from Kerensky ordering him to send reliable troops to Petrograd at once. "They are crazy in the Winter Palace," he said. "I have no reliable troops. If you have some, you may send them to Mr. Kerensky. I wash my hands of the matter."